

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 4, 6, 7 and 10 are pending in this application, with claim 1 being the only independent claim. Claims 1, 2, 4 and 10 have been amended. No new matter has been added. Reconsideration of the above-identified application, in view of the following amendments and remarks, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2, 4 and 10 stand objected to based on minor informalities. In response to each specific objection, applicants' have amended claims 1, 2, 4 and 10 in a self-explanatory manner. Withdrawal of the objection is thus deemed to be in order.

Claims 1, 2, 4 and 7 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. Pate. No. 5,631,445 ("*Herster*") in view of U.S. Pat. No 6,478,613 ("*Zoell*"). Claims 1, 6 and 10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. Pat. No. 5,697,769 ("*Kobman*") in view of *Zoell*. Reconsideration and withdrawal of these rejection are requested.

Independent claim 1 was previously amended to recite, *inter alia*, "circumferential sealing lip which includes a region that is oriented toward the electrical contacts and which seals the plug against the receiving device when fuel is conveyed through the fuel pump, the plug being extrusion-coated with plastic to form a plug casing". The Examiner-cited art fails to teach or suggest this limitation.

The Examiner (at pgs. 3-4) asserts that *Herster* teaches "an integrally formed, circumferential sealing lip (lower horizontal surface of groove 62; '62')", the circumferential sealing lip "includes a region that is oriented toward the electrical contacts (44, 45)", and that the circumferential sealing lip "seals the plug 32 against the receiving device 58". Applicants disagree.

Herster discloses “an electrical fitting for routing wires to an in-tank mounted fuel pump which provides an effective barrier against fuel vapor emissions from the fuel tank” (see col. 1, lines 6-9). Figs. 3A and 3B of *Herster* clearly show that the Examiner-identified surface of the groove 62 extends perpendicularly to the surface of the receiving device. Consequently, the groove 62 is oriented away from the electrical contacts 44, 45. Moreover, the groove 62 of *Herster* does not seal the plug 32 against the receiving device 58. Rather, the *Herster* device includes an O-ring 66 that is provided to achieve the sealing function. Under the Examiner’s proffered analysis, *Herster* fails to provide a plug that is extrusion coated. Accordingly, it is simply impossible for the groove 62 itself to seal the plug 32 against the receiving device 58 as asserted. Indeed, as stated previously, the O-ring 66 is included in the *Herster* device to provide the sealing function. However, this O-ring is not an integrally formed circumferential sealing lip that includes a region that is oriented toward the electrical contacts, as required by independent claim 1. Therefore, *Herster* fails to teach or suggest the expressly recited subject matter of independent claim 1.

Zoell is cited for its teaching of extrusion coating. *Zoell* is directed to a connector for a fuel pump of a motor vehicle that is extrusion coated for protection from corrosion caused by fuel. *Zoell* (col. 3, lines, 26-28) explains that “the connector 1 is plugged onto the bearing plate 10, after assembly”. *Zoell* (col. 3, line 30 to col. 4, line 4) additionally explains that “[t]he carbon brushes 5 are mounted, such that they can move, in the receptacles 11 in the bearing plate 10, in such a manner that they can move downward in the event of wear resulting from the electric motor, which is not illustrated but is arranged under the bearing plate 10”. However, *Zoell* still fails to teach or suggest a “circumferential sealing lip which includes a region that is oriented toward the electrical contacts and which seals the plug against the receiving device”.

Thus, the combination of *Herster* and *Zoell* fails to teach or suggest the expressly recited subject matter of independent claim 1.

According to the Examiner (pg. 6) *Kobman* teaches “an integrally formed, circumferential sealing lip (56) which includes a region (upper face of element 56 that abuts the lower end face of element 68) that is oriented toward the electrical contacts”. Applicants disagree.

Kobman relates to an electric pump outlet assembly (see col. 1, lines 5-6). *Kobman* explains that the “[t]he outer cover 30 is a hollow, cup-shaped member having a cylindrical side wall 66 substantially closed at the outer end by the end wall 49 and open at the inner end. The skirt 68 at the open end fits over the base 54 of the inner cover 32 and abuts the flange 56 of the inner cover. The outer cover thus encloses and protects the ways 58 on the inner cover and the brushes 62,64 therewithin” (see col. 2, lines 30-36). However, apart from merely explaining that the skirt 68 fits over the base 54 of the inner cover and abuts the flange 56 in the inner cover, there is no description whatsoever in *Kobman* of the structure of the flange 56 which the Examiner asserts corresponds to the claimed integrally formed circumferential sealing lip of independent claim 1. In fact, a quick review of Figs. 1 and 4 of *Kobman* reveals that the device shown therein suffers from the same deficiency as *Herster*. Specifically, the flange 56 of the *Kobman* device is also aligned perpendicularly to the sidewall of the base 54. Therefore, the plane created by this perpendicularly aligned surface is oriented radially outward and, thus, not toward the electrical contacts 75, 76 of the *Kobman* device. Moreover, the upper surface or face of the flange 56 creates a plane that extends in parallel to plane created by the electrical contacts 75, 76. It is a well-settled principle that parallel lines never intersect, and the skilled person knows this. *Kobman* likewise thus fails to teach or suggest the expressly recited subject matter of independent claim 1, i.e., “an integrally formed, circumferential sealing lip which includes a

region that is oriented toward the electrical contacts and which seals the plug against the receiving device”.

Zoell fails to teach what *Kobman* lacks. As explained above, *Zoell* also fails to disclose a circumferential sealing lip as recited in independent claim 1.

Since *Zoell* fails to teach or suggest a circumferential sealing lip, the combination of *Kobman* and *Zoell* fails to teach or suggest at least “an integrally formed, circumferential sealing lip which includes a region that is oriented toward the electrical contacts and which seals the plug against the receiving device” and “the plug being extrusion-coated with plastic to form a plug casing, the circumferential sealing lip being integrally formed together with the plug casing in one working step to permit simultaneous production of the integrally formed circumferential sealing lip with the plug casing”, as recited in independent claim 1.

In view of the foregoing, independent claim 1 is patentable over any combination of *Herster*, *Kobman* and *Zoell*. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) are therefore in order, and a notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

In view of the patentability of independent claim 1, dependent claims 2, 4, 6, 7 and 10, are also patentable over the prior art for the reasons set forth above, as well as for the additional recitations contained therein.

Based on the foregoing amendments and remarks, this application is in condition for allowance. Early passage of this case to issue is respectfully requested.

Should the Examiner have any comments, questions, suggestions, or objections, the Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned in order to facilitate reaching a resolution of any outstanding issues.

It is believed that no fees or charges are required at this time in connection with the present application. However, if any fees or charges are required at this time, they may be charged to our Patent and Trademark Office Deposit Account No. 03-2412.

Respectfully submitted,
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